

**Ayamonte (Spain) 37°12'.7N 7°24'.5W to
La Linea de la Concepción (Gibraltar)
36°09'.43N 05°21'.4W
May 20 to June 8, 2011**



2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

Friday, May 20. As soon as the marina office opened at 08:30 we go and pay our fees, take one more picture of *Silmaril* and leave the pontoon. With the strong tidal current we speed along Vila Real, the tricky harbor that is open to the current of the river and the



tides. With 10 knots over ground we reach the mouth of the river and the open sea.

We set sails after about one hour, but the wind is minimal and the motor has to help occasionally



Plumed visitors come on board on our way. This one is a tiny bird, but it succeeded to keep up with us, coming and going several times.

Any idea what its name could be?

Reports Silmaril 2011

We sail at a distance from the shore on order to avoid fishing nets. But even far off-shore we encounter large groups of them and we keep our eyes peeled non-stop. The picture shows two flags, but I took it for the beautiful clouds. The sky was just gorgeous the entire day.



We plan to stay over night in Mazagón. The marina lies a short distance up the river. We arrive at the diesel/reception pontoon at 15:30.

The procedure is always the same, make fast at the reception pontoon; go to the office with all the necessary papers, insurance, registration, passports; wait until everything is copied and the arrival form is filled in by hand with all the details from the

papers, pay the deposit for the entry card to the facilities and the pontoons, and finally get the number of your berth. All this does not bother us any longer. But we do wonder when we arrive at the assigned berth and find it far too small for *Silmaril*. The second one is very narrow, but we manage to get in. The lady at the reception must be new at her job, she could not even tell us where we can leave the fenced-in marina to go to the nearby village. Tall fences and a series of large villas block the way to the village on quite a stretch.



We finally detect a passage through a huge construction site and a number of unkempt gardens and end up on Main Street. We buy some food, but we do not feel at ease. Everything is run down, the people depressed, many black Africans who in the company of masses of Spaniards are out of work and just sit around. We could not recommend a visit to neither the village nor the marina.

A short distance up-river the city of Huelva seems an attractive place to see despite its large industrial

harbor and extensive chemical plants. There is also a car ferry line to the Canary Islands newly in operation from Huelva, in addition to the one leaving from Cadiz. The city of Cadiz is not pleased at all, since that diminishes their already scant business of the huge harbor.

2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

Saturday, May 21. Today we sail to the mouth of the river Guadalquivir and the marina in Chipiona, the point of departure for our trip all the way up to Seville. There is very little wind, but we still hoist the sails. Here as well the flags of fishing nets are many and close together, but at our leisurely pace the pose no problem at all. The nets themselves are pretty far below, but the connecting rope between the flag and the floats would be a real pain if caught in the propeller.

Our instruments are not well adjusted. Wind force and wind angle need to be corrected. We try a new calibration by slowly turning the boat at a steady speed full circle. No success. And we continue until total calm. The main sail flaps languidly and Alex goes swimming. The water is warm, 23.5°C.



Way before the actual mouth of the river, approximately at the height of Chipiona, we meet with peculiar water. The tanker is at anchor in grey river water that reaches far out to sea at ebb tide and we still sail on clear seawater.

At 15:30 we arrive in the marina. The entrance is heavily silted and I had a queasy feeling when the depth sounder showed 2.5 m. But I search very carefully

for the deepest channel and we make it safely. As in every other marina we go to the office. The lady here is a charming young person, pretty and friendly and speaking good English! What a relief to find that Spanish marina offices are not only occupied by ignorant "pickled cucumbers". She even assigns us an "easy" berth, meaning wide enough and easily accessible from the wide end of the fishing harbor, where I find plenty of room to maneuver in the strong evening breeze.

Soon after our arrival two other boats make fast at our pontoon. Both men sail alone, the one is a young Belgian, the other an elderly Scott, whom we had already met in Milford Haven in Wales and who had given Alex the sound advice to mount a simple lifting device for the DuoGen generator for safety reasons. We did install such a thing in Lagos and have appreciated ever since.

They both arrive from up river and have many valuable things to tell us. We had planned to go to the marina in Guelves, on a side arm of the river just after the lock to Sevilla. But we hear that there is a power cable before the marina at 16.5 m or so. And our mast is just too tall. We need 21m clearance.

Behind us in the direction of the sea, the fishing fleet of Chipiona is moored nose first to the pier behind the breakwater. There are at least twenty small boats, all of them of a similar make, white hulled and equipped with the long poles and their colorful flags and heaps of nets. In front of them on the pier stands the long line of small sheds, where every boat has its storeroom. Everything seems well organized and in good working order.

Reports Silmaril 2011

Unfortunately I missed taking a picture. We went for a stroll and on our return it was already too dark for a good shot. Too bad, it was a lovely sight.

Our walk through the town, however, did yield a few nice pictures.

First we go along Main Street with all its souvenir shops, each similar to the other, as in all beach resorts. There are many tourists, most of them Spaniards, though. A great church and the adjacent former convent in a pretty square take pride of place in the old part of the town



Many rows of neat houses and comely little squares adorn this part of the town as well.



2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

We like it a lot in this place, despite the crowds of tourists. The sea front is full of happy people and restaurants, the beach still peopled with sun bathers and a few swimmers. And all of them speak Spanish!



We eat on the water front. The tortillas are very greasy and do not at all look like the shrimp omelet I ordered. The shrimp are the size of large transparent flies, hardly perceptible among the coarsely shredded potatoes. Well, my fault, I should learn Spanish at a greater speed!

And tomorrow we will start our trip up river to Seville. Alex keeps calculating and recalculating until very late. The silted exit of the marina will not let us pass at low tide; we need a bit more water. And the tidal currents in the river are strong, up to three knots with the incoming water. Moreover, we should arrive before eight in the evening, since the drawbridge before the Club Nautico opens only once a day, at eight on Sundays, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at ten.

Sunday, May 22. Barely awake I already am nervous. The trip up-river scares me and I cannot tell why. The agitation causes us to leave too early. We fill up diesel at 10:30, pay our harbor fees and leave. Everything goes smoothly. The exit has plenty of water since we are ahead of schedule. But the current has not changed yet and we sail against it for a few hours.



A dredged fair way lined with great buoys runs from Chipiona through the shallow bay to the mouth of the river at Bonanza behind Sanlúcar de Barrameda, where the river trip actually starts. We received an excellent hand-drawn map of the entire length of the Guadalquivir with all the navigation marks and some descriptions of the shores.

Reports Silmaril 2011

I check them off as we pass them in order to know exactly where we are. I feel perfectly fine now and ever since we reached the open water. It often happens that I am nervous before we leave and that I am relaxed and happy on the way.



A famous wreck lies in the bay, a warning that calm water in settled weather may not be taken for granted. Violent storms may prove fatal for ships with engine

trouble.

Sanlúcar de Barrameda is only partially pretty. There are also ugly high-rises and decrepit wharfs. The financial crisis has affected shipbuilding and fishing dramatically, the number of tourists has dropped and consequently many hotels and apartment buildings in Andalusia are practically empty. Many fishing boats lie abandoned at anchor or on shore.



2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

The river is wide and brown; the banks here are low and silted. I observed people with the binoculars who stand knee-deep in the sandy mud digging for mussels. The bucket with the crop keeps sinking and needs to be lifted every so often and set in another spot.

Further up-river, reeds grow on the low bank to the west and pine trees stand tall on the elevated embankments. In the east the river is lined with trees and bushes. Both banks are lined with structures made of wood, tires, bricks, boulders or concrete to guard against erosion. But the river keeps eating into the banks after every heavy rain and at high tide. The little house will eventually end up in the river.



Swamps and ancient salt works flank the left bank on the lower course of the river. We can only see the locks of the irrigation canals. Further up there are witnesses of agriculture, water pumps, a small farm once in a while, a few cows. On every mast storks are nesting.

This pair has chosen a green navigation light. There is already a young one. The camera does not really succeed in yielding a good picture.



Reports Silmaril 2011

Many birds are nesting in a group of eucalyptus trees and on the bare tree trunks next to it, storks, spoon bills and several kinds of herons. Many gulls circle above them and ducks



swim from one shore to the other. What a fascinating view! I secretly wished for a better zoom lens. They fly from tree to tree, carry material for the nests in their beaks, glide across the water, wade along the banks searching for food. I would love to drop anchor, just sit and watch.



Too bad, the pictures are a poor substitute for what our eyes see and what our mind registers of the busy bird life.

On the way Alex calculates over and over to find out, whether we would reach the bridge in time. I stand or sit at the helm, check off the navigation marks, make a few notes of favorable anchorages for the return trip and take pictures.

2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

Further up-river we pass two villages. A few boats lie at anchor. So, we could easily stay over night here some place.



After eight hours we turn around a bend and suddenly face the huge new lock. No chart shows its position yet. But we knew about it. Our two companions from Chipiona had mentioned it. The doors are open, but the entry light is red. What is going on? Alex calls on the phone and the radio.

We get an answer in full-speed Spanish, amazing how fast they can move their speech organs!. Finally he reached somebody in the marina; they speak English and call the lock for us. It is 7:45 pm, we will not be able to pass the bridge, but we can enter the lock, wait for a freighter to arrive shortly, pass with it, anchor somewhere and sail to the marina tomorrow evening.



The lock is obviously not equipped for yachts. Alex uses a metal ladder to make fast at one point. He then climbs, up to find a pollard, but the line is too short. I attach a second one with a bowline, nervously, since a lock worker watches from high up with a smirk on his face!



In the end everything goes well, we are moored and wait for the *Nordic Erika* to arrive. We eat, discuss the possibilities for anchorage and are happy to be so near to the wonderful city of Seville.

Reports Silmaril 2011

And here she is, the *Nordic Erika*. The tug boat pushes her very slowly around the bend and into the lock.



As soon as the lock opens, the worker signals to leave immediately. We go ahead at good speed to gain a safe distance from the monster behind us. The route we must take is not clear. *Silmaril* runs over land on the plotter.



The construction of the new lock involved extensive digging with the creation of a direct fairway into the Darsena del Cuarto. I need time and space to find the way in the dusk and would not appreciate the *Nordic Erika* looming at the stern. But it takes them a while to get started and soon we sail into the Darsena and to a protected anchorage.

2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

At ten o'clock we are safely at anchor in front of a cement factory of Holcim (a Swiss company!), people fishing on the shore, bats zigzagging around the quiet buildings and we enjoy the first evening in Sevilla.

Monday, May 23. We have a full day to read, write, sort pictures, and do some chores. The deck is filthy and we take a good hour to clean the entire boat. Around eight we weigh anchor and tug toward the draw bridge. Mooring is as difficult as in the lock; a vaulted stone pier is clearly ill suited for a small yacht. Somehow Alex manages, however, between a ladder and two huge pollards on the pier. He has to crawl backwards on all fours to safely reach the first rung of the ladder to come back on deck again. His descent looks like a hair-raising experience from below. His white t-shirt still bears rust marks, although fading with every wash.



At 9:45 pm we wait in front of the bridge, slowly drifting back and forth the engine compensating the light breeze. The railway drawbridge is already open.



At 10 pm sharp, the traffic is stopped and the four parts of the highway bridge are lifted.



It is already dark and I steer very slowly towards the marina of the Club Nautico. As we come near the first pontoon, a voice calls "*Silmaril?*" and a man waves us toward a space between the line of boats and helps with the mooring lines. With some difficulties we straighten the boat between the two neighbors, mount the ladder on the anchor and go to sleep.

Reports Silmaril 2011

Tuesday, May 24. We wake up and are already hot. Nevertheless we walk to the nearest information office to get a map and then visit the cathedral. The complex of buildings is huge. We wander around for hours, stunned by the megalomania of the builders and the works of art by the thousands. The treasure is simply unbelievable. What an investment in money, labor and certainly incredible human suffering!!



No picture can truly reproduce the dizzying height of the main nave and the cupola above the crossing. The same holds true for the size and the minute details of the choir stalls. The eye sees so much more than the camera.



We climb the famous Giralda, enjoy the spectacular view and admire the many large and small bells.

2 nd Report Silmaril 2011



Far below us *Silmaril* is just barely visible, the blue hull among the other white ones moored in the marina of the Club Nautico; right behind it the low bridge Puente de la Delicias; in the background the new highway bridge; directly below us the roof of the cathedral and parts of the city.



Around the entire walkway of the Giralda large, small and tiny bells are mounted on the inner walls and in the

windows. All of them are in working order. Too bad that we cannot experience their tolling.

We are pretty tired and for the first time, indulge in a serving of genuine "jamón iberico", the cured meat of the typical Iberian black pig, the "patta negra".



Reports Silmaril 2011

The waiter cuts the meat right at the counter. A number of gammons (?) hang in the background. We drink a lot of tonic water. It is awfully hot.



On our way back we detect a traffic-free street on our side of the river with many little shops. We buy a Spanish dictionary, large envelopes for all kinds of papers and a new diary. I like the linen-bound mauve little book very much.

In the evening we drink a beer in the club and sleep peacefully for many hours.

Wednesday, May 25. *Silmaril* needs cleaning. I always wonder where the dust and dirt stem from. Around midday we unpack the bikes and head for the marina outside the city, where we hope to find a wind scoop, a cover for the dinghy and several other accessories we miss because of the heat. The route is complicated and the city map only crude. In a small street we consult our directions for some time. A driver asks us where we want to go and instead of explaining he signals us to follow him. He starts and we, especially I, pedal behind him, tongue lolling! When we already see the marina, he waves with both hands and turns the other way. We find the place and arrive shortly just a little out of breath. Unfortunately the chandlery is not very well stocked, no wind scoop, no dinghy cover, no fairleads. The only thing they have is rope for the sun sail. My hand signs for ten plus 2 meters seem unclear; the friendly lady cuts twice ten meters. In any case, rope is always useful. On our way back we run through a very nice residential area.



2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

We head for the lovely garden Parque Maria Luisa to recover. The site is huge, beautiful and very restful. A gigantic palace is part of it. A small lake with an island forms the approaches to the main entrance. Little row boats are for rent.



The four girls keep bumping into the steps, no progress as long as we watch them!

There are many secluded little nooks, tall trees, lush bushes and flowers everywhere.



And there are beautifully glazed tiles, on park benches, balustrades, candelabra, even as maps and descriptions on the ground.



In the evening we cool off with a few lengths in the Olympic Pool at the Club.

Reports Silmaril 2011

Thursday, May 26. Another bicycling day. We cycle through the innumerable narrow alleys of the historic district past dozens of churches, all of them closed for siesta unfortunately. Then we see an open gate in the wall of a convent and go into the small courtyard. At the back there is a curious revolving door surrounded by blue tiles. A price list of sweets invites visitors to buy them. Next to it is a tiny plastic bell with the business hours. I push the button and a high-pitched small female voice introduces herself. "Can I buy some biscuits, posso comprar?" She apparently understands my gibberish: "Si, si, dica!" I order from the list a dozen of these and a dozen of those, choosing what sounds like biscuits, but I have no idea what finally appears through the revolving door in the plastic bag. We put the money in the door and with a "gracias" the door turns again. We pack our purchase from the convent of Santa Ines in the bike bags, still overcome by the medieval moments we have just experienced.



The convent seems to be well known for its baked goods and does good business. Every biscuit is separately wrapped in cellophane with the imprint of the convent. The plastic bag is also adorned with an even more elaborate imprint. The guide book even mentions it.

We do feel that such practices belong to the Middle Ages, but Sevilla is full of convents and monasteries. We see the large gates in the tall walls everywhere. They belong and still function here and are part of everyday life.

We spend the evening in a flamenco show in the "Dos Gallos" theater. It is a small but traditional place. We are seated, receive a glass of sangria and watch for two solid hours an amazing performance. The dancing, the music and the costumes are out of this world. We need to celebrate this wonderful evening and eat with great relish a dish of "arroz negro" with shrimps and drink a bottle of wine!

2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

Friday, Mau 27. Tomorrow we will leave Seville, therefore we take the bikes again and visit the "Reales Alcázares", the gigantic palace that was first built in the 9th century. It was enlarged and changed over the centuries and adjusted to the needs and tastes of the later rulers. We got almost lost in the maze of rooms and gardens.



Pictures without tourists are only possible with the camera aiming at ceilings!



The subterranean bath of a prince is deserted and in the garden as well Alex is able to take pictures with no people.



We did not stay very long. A first impression is enough, since the thousands of details are so stunning that they will hardly be remembered.



Reports Silmaril 2011

A medieval market is taking place in the garden of San Sebastian. Many stalls show the customary cheap junk. But every so often we find something really exciting. A falconer exhibits many birds of prey. The bald eagle is just landing on his gloved hand and the falconer puts the leather cap on.



He calms down after the flight and after five minutes he is freed and can see again. There are a good dozen birds, each in an area marked off by bales of straw. An old and obviously self-made merry-go-round delights us. It is driven by foot pedal!



2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

On our return to the marina, we cycle along the traffic free street and buy an iron. Here in Seville I feel like ironing Alex's shirts a little. On the water and in rural destinations I will probably forget it again and make do with stretching and folding!

A cooling swim in the Olympic pool restores our energy and puts us in the mood for a last evening in the city. We walk and wander through already familiar places, look around, admire, drink a liter of "sangria", eat another meal of delicious seafood and drink a bottle of wine. We are a bit tipsy, but find our way to the marina without any problems and climb on board without falling in. It is a perfect farewell.

Saturday, May 28. Today we will be on the river again. The bridge opens at 8 pm, so, we do this and that during the day. Alex is downloading the tracks; I experiment with the new iron and the layers of blankets and sheets to protect the table and prepare the interior of *Silmaril* for the trip. A last short bicycle tour on this side of the river takes us to the market hall and a great many small alleys full of people, churches and shops. On the market place we meet a crowd of dressed up folk, probably wedding guests.

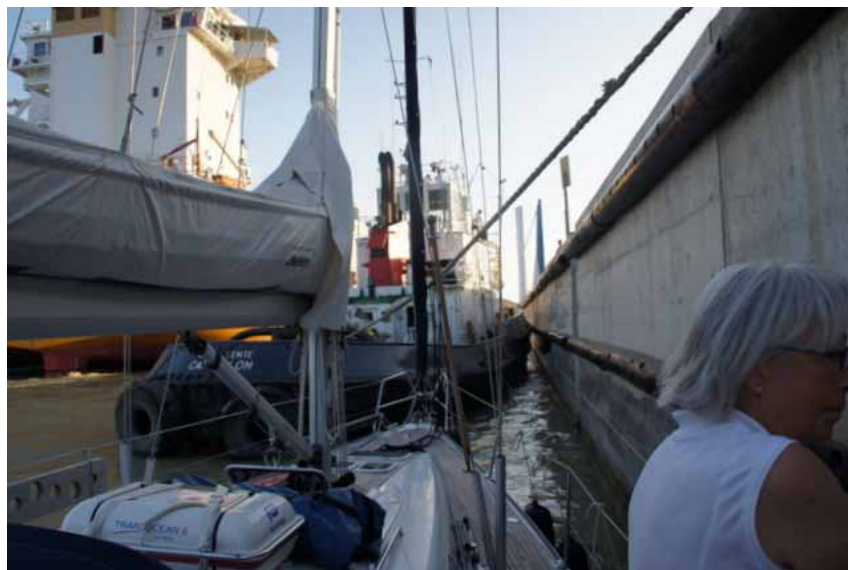


We have great fun watching the different outfits. Most heels are very tall, only a few flat, the dresses very long or very short and the headdresses of undreamed-of ingenuity. The combinations of colors are almost perfect. Shoes, belts, hats and handbags fit and the colors are gorgeous.

Reports Silmaril 2011

And now the moment of departure has arrived. We pack the bicycles, stow the food and finish last-minute mails.

With the help of neighbors on the pontoon, English, Swedish and German, we leave with a chorus of advice from all of them.



All is well, we are free and tug toward the bridge. They open a few minutes before eight, we pass swiftly and shortly afterwards the *Opdr Cadiz* turns into the river in front of us. She will pass the lock and we with her. In the lock we feel a bit nervous. We are supposed to make fast directly behind the tugger. As soon as we have a line on the

ladder, they close the door just behind our stern. The forestay touches the heavy rope from the tugger to the pier and Alex fastens a line over it. As soon as the door is closed and the water flows in the turbulence behind the running propeller of the ship is so strong that I need help with the line at the ladder. Alex takes over and I attend to the line in

front and hold on to the cable of the tugger. The situation reaches a climax when we receive the signal to turn around the tugger and follow the ship in the agitated water of its wake where maneuvering is erratic. But with a little help with shoving and pushing we manage. No one cared about our difficulties. The workers on the tugger just glared at us.

2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

Well, they have no idea about sailboats and their very different dimensions and properties from the vessels they are operating.



We leave the lock despite weak knees with no mishap and follow the *Opdr Cadiz*. For another hour the current was with us and we sailed on behind the disappearing ship. In the dusk we meet a young Swiss who is about to drop his anchor close to a village. We only exchange brief questions about where from and where to, since he is in a hurry to row his dinghy ashore to watch a soccer game England against someone at the

TV of a restaurant!!

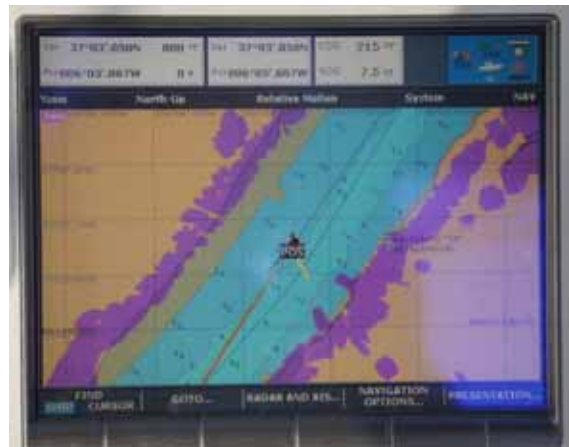
We drop anchor and turn in soon. We want to get up early to take advantage of the current down river.

Sunday, May 29. We have breakfast at 05:30, weigh anchor at 06:35. The Swiss soccer fan is still asleep. A sunrise is always exciting, no matter where we watch it.



Reports Silmaril 2011

All of a sudden we are surrounded by fog and Alex turns the radar on.



The purple color shows the land. The fairway is pretty narrow and large ships must be expected.

The fog did not last long and we enjoy again the many birds. I believe there are also birds of prey among them.



However, not only the storks, the spoon bills and the birds of prey are flying.

2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

During an entire hour small yellow airplanes fly terrifyingly close to our mast and spray the fields on both sides of the river!! Why on Sunday? Is it water or poison?



The tidal current has turned and the river is now flowing upstream, so we drop anchor and sleep for a while. After a light lunch we continue, although the current is still against us. Out on the open sea we tack in long legs toward Rota. The wind increases considerably, *Silmaril* heels badly and when we arrive the disorder in the boat is chaotic. My closet has opened, the bookcase on Alex's side is empty, all the books are on the bed mixed with clothing and our dear "tomte" from Sweden is on the floor. It's not the first time this has happened. Only the closet could have been locked. Everything is fine in the pantry, I usually close everything tight. But in the store room even Alex's tool crates tumbled from their stack, because we had removed the small genoa and the Gennaker (any suggestions for the German expression?). But there is no damage and tidying is all that's needed. We will remember the harbor of Rota for ever. After registration at the office pontoon I am heading happily toward the assigned berth. With the strong wind I miscalculate the drift, *Silmaril* turns too much and threatens to hit the finger pontoon on her port side. Alex, already ashore, has to let the line go and I back out full throttle. (Renzo will remember his maneuver in Póvoa de Varzim!). I succeed in turning *Silmaril* in the narrow space between the pontoons with gas forward and backwards. A group of Spaniards are watching attentively as I back out into the wider space of the harbor entrance. A line is still dragging in the water, but I cannot get Alex on board without turning and risking the line tangled in the propeller. I let *Silmaril* drift and go get the line myself. My heart is racing, but all is well and I can start the maneuver again. And this time I manage, Alex and another helper are on the pontoon, *Silmaril* glides into the berth, Alex catches the line, fixes it on the clamp and I can motor into it, thus stabilizing the boat along the finger. The Spaniards clap frantically, but I am not ashamed. It was difficult with 17 knots of gusty wind.

Reports Silmaril 2011

Monday, May 30 to Sunday, June 5. Wind and wave conditions in the strait of Gibraltar force us to remain in Rota for a few days. The "levante" is blowing with steady 30 to 40 knots from the direction we are headed. That is an imposition! We will stay here and enjoy what Rota and Cadiz across the bay have to offer.



Yes, Monday morning we sleep in with relish, a well deserved luxury. We stroll through the pretty town and take a first glimpse of what Rota has in store for us.

There is the large "Moon Castle" with its beautiful interior courtyard - the cloister of the former monastery -, a few churches, innumerable winding alleys in which we keep getting lost on foot or on bike.



2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

Rota is a famous resort where Spaniards from Madrid and Barcelona come for their summer holiday. The climate is agreeable, never really hot, cool at night. That explains the ugly hotel complexes along the beach.



We use the promenade often on our bike tours. It runs along the beach up to the beginning of the nature park in the sand dunes, where chameleons are still living. Bikes are forbidden in the park and we wander on the wooden walkways through the dunes, the pine forest and down to the sandy beach. We never saw a chameleon. They are very shy and of course, perfectly camouflaged. It takes knowledge and patience to observe them. But we see plenty of bugs,

small round ones and a kind of stag beetle.



A short distance north of the nature park we visit the originally Phoenician "corrales". They are stone enclosures in the tidal region, where fish swam in at high water and were trapped when the ebb tide set in. The fishermen caught them from flat-bottomed boats. Today people still fish in them or gather mussels and crabs.



Reports Silmaril 2011

Wherever we go, restaurants serve delicious food. In *Los Olivos* we recuperated from the heat and the strenuous walk over the stony walls of the "corrales". The restaurant is part of an apartment hotel. When sailing will be no longer feasible and walking painful, I could imagine spending a holiday here, from bed to pool to table!



On Tuesday we take the ferry across the bay and visit Cadiz. It is a half-hour ride.



Before we go to the cathedral, we drink tonic water on the square in front of the municipal building and study the city map. A group of demonstrators march up and down the arcades at the main entrance. They carry all kinds of instruments and a megaphone and create an incredible racket. They distribute pamphlets demanding a minimal wage of 700 Euros. We cannot

find out who is asking for it.

We visit the cathedral. It stands in a large square right behind the first row of houses near the harbor. It is a huge building. Its twin towers surmount the entire city. We feel lost inside, but are nevertheless fascinated by a number of special details.



2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

A gigantic lectern stands in the choir carrying a beautiful old hymn book, behind it the artfully carved choir stalls, in the left upper corner a small section of the grand organ is illuminated. Two identical parts facing each other high up in the choir make up the entire instrument.



The enormous crypt is in itself an impressive structure. Several rooms are situated around a vast vaulted space, in which (and only there) a curious echo reflects the noise of our steps and even the softest words from the walls.

Manuel de Falla is buried here. He was born in Cadiz and his remains were repatriated after his death in Argentina. He is worshiped in his city. We meander through the narrow alleys, the very

narrow alleys.



This one on the right tries time and again with the rear-view mirrors folded in, but the scaffold does not budge, only backing up will lead to an exit!!



Reports Silmaril 2011

On the wider streets I see many lovely details on the more prosperous homes. I took pictures of all sorts of knockers, but this pair of hands is certainly the most graceful one of the collection.



After a long walk through the garden of the Horticultural School with its impressive giant trees and a bit crazy



We do not really appreciate the military site, but the chapel on the parade ground is worth a picture. It is so well proportioned and looks so peaceful.

boxwood sculptures, we pay a visit to the old fort. Nowadays the site is used for art exhibits and various cultural events. We like the glass works of the Finnish artist Salo. We enjoy many of his creations, but the sculpture "Gone in the Wind" is our favored.



2 nd Report Silmaril 2011

On the last evening in Rota, on Sunday, June 5, we go out for dinner with our Swiss friends and with Linda and Henry from the *Alibi*. We find a traditional "bodega" where every order of wine is served from the barrel. We stand at a high table and taste a series of "tapas" and quite a number of local wines. There is only one small glass with each sample for all of us, a good thing, since the wines are good and go down smoothly.

Monday, June 6. *Alibi* and *Silmaril* meet as planned at 9:00 at the harbor exit of Rota and sail on together to Barbate. The wind is almost nil at first, but freshens to a stiff breeze, unfortunately directly on our nose. But wind and waves remain moderate and we enjoy a very nice sailing day. Abreast of Cabo Trafalgar, the coast runs west to east, the wind changes constantly and blows from aft now. But Barbate not far and we manage passably. The cape, where Nelson lost his life despite the victory of the British in the battle steeped in history, presents itself in a light haze and at considerable distance. We sail pretty far out to avoid the shallow coast and the strong currents.



Reports Silmaril 2011

In the harbor of Barbate at night, a large flock of seagulls screamed for a long time and in the morning, the water and pontoons were covered with feathers. The war of the gulls? They must have plucked each other fiercely.



We had planned to sail to Gibraltar today. But the marina we were scheduled to touch at to retrieve a parcel we had ordered was closed because of an oil spill from an exploded tank on shore. So, we stay in Barbate for another day.

The town stretches along a wide bay, sand beach as far as the eye can reach. A very old method of catching tuna is practiced here, the "almadraba". The small museum is a treasure trove with its exhibits, models and a video in English. We study the "almadraba" in detail. The nets are suspended on steel cables with floaters and fixed to the ground with anchors. They are



They are arranged in the pattern of a labyrinth. The fish swim inside and cannot find the exit again. In the last chamber, a net is laid out on the ground that is raised when enough fish are trapped. They are slaughtered man against fish. The battle is not totally partial to man; the tuna are large fish and accidents do occur. But the pictures we saw are gruesome; the fish that are still alive seem to fight for their lives in pure blood!

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The link <http://www.tobarbate.com/almadra.htm> is in Spanish, but a few pictures illustrate some detail.

At the time, the boats and the spare anchors are in the harbor, the nets are placed out in the bay. They are marked in the sea charts and lighted at night or delimited by navigation marks. To sail into the labyrinth would be a true calamity for every one involved!!



Tomorrow we sail to Gibraltar, although Queensway Quay Marina is still closed.

We will circumnavigate the nets in safe distance. Alex and Henry planned the route we will take together

Wednesday, June 8. We rise early. Tide, wind and currents decide on the best time of departure. Therefore, we get up at five o'clock and cast off at five minutes to six o'clock. Henry and Linda follow close behind *Silmaril*. It is still pitch-dark and we are glad to see the nets clearly and can follow the plotted route safely. Sunrises keep fascinating us. Shortly before the sun appears, the east presents its most spectacular colors, *Alibi* is sailing to the west against a grey sky and on lead-colored water.



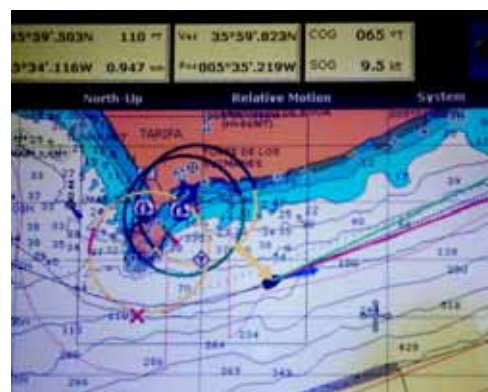
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They have already hoisted the main sail, but the motor is helping, since the wind leaves a lot to be desired.

And then the sun is arriving, shows a little and is here.



And soon the wind freshens, the current sets in and we sail with 9 to 10 knots around the most southern point of mainland Europe. Here lays notorious Tarifa, usually swept by strong gusty winds. We are lucky today and the calculations prove accurate. Wind and waves are simply perfect.



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From far away, the bay of Algeciras and Gibraltar seems totally blocked by a host of large ships. Alex counts 46 on the AIS list. Further in, they really lie close together. The wind is acting up; we are hard pressed to even find out where it blows from. We strike the main sail and continue under genoa across the bay, winding our way among the huge ships toward Queensway Quay Marina with the famous rock right in front of us. We want to find out where and how the marina is located. It is still closed. No one can get in or out.



We circle around a few more tankers and go on to La Linea, a brand new marina on Spanish ground. *Alibi* has almost arrived in the harbor.

The guest pier is very awkward; at low water the concrete pier is so tall one can hardly climb it. But we are requested to land and take care of formalities before we are assigned a berth. *Alibi* has its lines already on shore. Henry helped Linda to hoist herself onto the pier and signals us to come alongside. We moor *Silmaril* alongside *Alibi* in very gusty wind.



In return for the offered simple maneuver, we help Henry and Linda to tie up right next to us. We are all four of us very relieved to have arrived. The passage through the bay with the strong wind and turbulent water between the many huge ships at anchor has caused us a few taxing moments. I will describe our stay in Gibraltar and the continuation of the voyage in the 3rd report.

